

REMARKS

Claims 15-24 and 26-28 are pending in the present application. In the final Office Action of December 29, 2004, all claims were rejected. Applicant hereby cancels claims 17-24, 28-30, 35 and 38, amends claims 15, 26, 31 and 34, and traverses the rejections as follows.

Double Patenting Rejection

Claims 15-24 and 26-38 stand rejected under the judicially created doctrine of obviousness-type double patenting as being unpatentable over claims 1-6 of U.S. Pat. No. 6,779,943. With this response, Applicant has filed a terminal disclaimer in compliance with 37 CFR 1.321(c) to overcome this rejection.

Response to Claim Objections

Claims 15-24, 26-30 and 36-37 have been objected to because of certain informalities noted by the Examiner in claims 15, 17, 26 and 36. Applicant has made appropriate corrections to claims 15, 26 and 36. Applicant has canceled claims 17-24 and 28-30, rendering the objections as to those claims moot.

Response to Claim Rejections Under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b)

Claim 29 stands rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by Winchester (US 3,380,267). Applicant has canceled claim 29, rendering the rejection moot.

Claims 17-20, 22-24 and 31 stand rejected under U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by Corzine (US Re. 33,946). Applicant has canceled claims 17-20 and 22-24, rendering the rejection of those claims moot. Applicant has amended claim 31 as discussed below in response to the Examiner's indication of allowable subject matter.

Response to Claim Rejections Under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a)

Claims 15-16, 21, 30, 32-34, 36 and 37 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Corzine (US Re. 33,946) in view of Blanchfield et al. (US 5,531,536). Applicant has canceled claims 21 and 30 rendering the rejection of those claims moot. Applicant has amended claims 15-16, 32-34 and 36-37 as discussed below in response to the Examiner's indication of allowable subject matter.

Allowable Subject Matter

The Examiner has indicated that claims 26-27 would be allowable upon filing a compliant terminal disclaimer to overcome the Examiner's double patenting rejection and if rewritten to overcome the Examiner's objection to claim 26 noted above. As stated above, Applicant has filed a compliant terminal disclaimer and has made appropriate correction to claim 26. Applicants respectfully submit, therefore, that claims 26 and 27 are in condition for allowance.

The Examiner has indicated that claim 28 would be allowable upon filing a compliant terminal disclaimer to overcome the double patenting rejection and if rewritten to overcome the Examiner's objection to claim 15 noted above and in independent form to include all of the limitations of claim 15. In addition to filing the terminal disclaimer, Applicant has amended claim 15 (which is in independent form) to include the additional limitation of claim 28. Applicant has therefore canceled claim 28 to avoid reciting duplicate claims. Claims 16 and 37 depend from and include all of the limitations of claim 15. Applicants respectfully submit, therefore, that claims 15, 16 and 37 are in condition for allowance.

The Examiner has indicated that claim 35 would be allowable upon filing a compliant terminal disclaimer to overcome the double patenting rejection and if rewritten in independent form to include all of the limitations of claim 34. In addition to filing the terminal disclaimer, Applicant has amended claim 34 (which is in independent form) to include the additional limitation of claim 35. Applicant has therefore canceled claim 35 to avoid reciting duplicate claims. Claim 36 depends from and includes all of the limitations of claim 34. Applicants respectfully submit, therefore, that claims 34 and 36 are in condition for allowance.

The Examiner has indicated that claim 38 would be allowable upon filing a compliant terminal disclaimer to overcome the double patenting rejection and if rewritten in independent form to include all of the limitations of claim 31. In addition to filing the terminal disclaimer, Applicant has amended claim 31 (which is in independent form) to include the additional limitation of claim 38. Applicant has therefore canceled claim 38 to avoid reciting duplicate

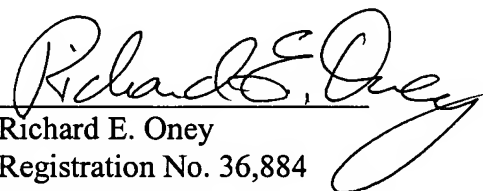
claims. Claims 32 and 33 depend from and include all of the limitations of claim 31. Applicants respectfully submit, therefore, that claims 31, 32 and 33 are in condition for allowance.

Conclusion

Applicant respectfully submits that all of the stated grounds of rejection have been properly traversed, accommodated, or rendered moot. Applicant therefore requests that the Examiner reconsider all presently outstanding rejections, that they be withdrawn and that the claims be allowed. It is believed that a full and complete reply has been made to the outstanding Office Action and, as such, the present application is in condition for allowance. If the Examiner believes, for any reason, that personal communication will expedite prosecution of this application, the Examiner is invited to telephone the undersigned at the number provided.

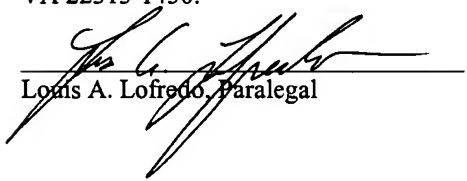
Dated: June 29, 2005

Respectfully submitted,


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I hereby certify that this paper and all documents and any fee referred to herein are being deposited on the date indicated above with the U.S. Postal Service "Express Mail Post Office to Addressee" service under 37 C.F.R. § 1.10, postage prepaid and addressed to the Mail Stop AF, Commissioner for Patents, P.O. Box 1450, Alexandria, VA 22313-1450.


Louis A. Lofredo, Paralegal

6-29-05
Date of Signature